

top layer. The denier value of the bi-component fibers of the lower layer ranges between 4 and 10 dtex.

In the claims:

A<sup>2</sup> 1 1. (Amended) A composite material for producing a layer of a  
2 disposable absorbent hygienic article that comes into physical contact with the body,  
3 made of at least two non-woven material layers joined by thermal processing, where  
4 the upper layer for physical contact with the body is formed of a mixture of mono-  
5 component fibers and bi-component fibers and the percentage of bi-component fibers  
6 amounts to 30 - 70 % by weight of the upper layer, and where the denier of the fibers  
7 of the upper layer is at most 3.5 dtex, and where the lower layer includes at least 40  
8 % by weight of bi-component fibers whose higher melting component is made of  
9 PET and whose lower melting component has a lower melting point than that of the  
10 mono-component fibers of the upper layer, and where the denier of the bi-component  
11 fibers of the lower layer is between 4 and 10 dtex.

1 2. (Amended) The composite material in accordance with claim 1,  
2 characterized in that the upper layer for physical contact with the body has a textured  
3 pattern created by calendering, where the percentage of the textured surface  
4 comprises 5 to 30 % of the total surface.

1 3. (Amended) The composite material in accordance with claim 2,  
2 wherein the percentage of the textured surface comprises 15 to 25 % of the total  
3 surface.

1 4. (Amended) The composite material in accordance with claim 1,  
2 wherein the surface weight of the upper layer is about 10 to 30 g/m<sup>2</sup>.

1 5. (Amended) The composite material in accordance with claim 4,  
2 wherein the surface weight of the upper layer is about 15 to 20 g/m<sup>2</sup>.

1                   6.       (Amended) The composite material in accordance with claim 1,  
2 wherein the fibers of the upper layer are one of hydrophilic and made supple to be  
3 permanently hydrophilic.

1                   7.       (Amended) The composite material in accordance with claim 1,  
2 wherein the lower layer comprises at least 60 % by weight bi-component fibers  
3 whose higher melting component is made of PET.

1                   8.       (Amended) The composite material in accordance with claim 7,  
2 wherein the lower layer comprises at least 80 % by weight bi-component fibers  
3 whose higher melting component is made of PET.

1                   9.       (Amended) The composite material in accordance with claim 8,  
2 wherein the lower layer consists of 100 % of bi-component fibers whose higher  
3 melting component is made of PET.

1                   10.      (Amended) The composite material in accordance with claim 1,  
2 wherein the bi-component fibers of the lower layer with PET as higher melting  
3 component is a sheath/core fiber.

1                   11.      (Amended) The composite material in accordance with claim  
2 10, wherein the sheath/core fiber has a core positioned eccentrically to the  
3 longitudinal center direction of the fiber.

1                   12.      (Amended) The composite material in accordance with claim  
2 11, wherein the denier of the sheath/core fiber is 5 to 8 dtex.

1                   13.      (Amended) The composite material in accordance with claim  
2 12, wherein the denier of the sheath/core fiber is 6 to 7 dtex.

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1                   14.     (Amended) The composite material in accordance with claim 1,  
2     wherein the lower melting component of the bi-component fiber present at least 40 %  
3     by weight in the lower layer is made of polyethylene.

1                   15.     (Amended) An absorbent hygienic article with a fluid-tight  
2     layer not in physical contact with a body during use, a retaining element and a fluid-  
3     permeable layer furnished on a side of the retaining element in physical contact with  
4     the body, wherein the layer furnished on the fluid-permeable side of the retaining  
5     element in physical contact with the body comprises a composite material in  
6     accordance with claim 1.

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1                   16.     (Amended) An absorbent hygienic article having a  
2     fluid-tight layer not in physical contact with the body during use, a retaining element  
3     and a fluid-permeable layer provided on the side of the retaining element in physical  
4     contact with the body, where the retaining element comprises one layer of intralinked  
5     cellulose fibers with a fluid retention value which is derived from the quotients of the  
6     mass ( $g_{FI}$ ) of the fluid absorbed and the dry mass ( $g_{Fiber}$ ) of the cellulose fibers and is  
7     between 0.6 and 0.9  $g_{FI}/g_{Fiber}$ , wherein the layer of intralinked cellulose fibers contains  
8     8 - 15 % by weight of superabsorbent polymer materials, where the fluid-permeable  
9     layer provided on the side of the retaining element in physical contact with the body  
10    is at least double-layered and an upper of the double layers consists of fibers with a  
11    denier of at most 3.5 dtex, while a lower of the double layers comprises bi-  
12    component fibers with a denier between 4 and 10 dtex whose higher melting  
13    component is made of PET.

1                   17.     (Amended) The absorbent hygienic article in accordance with  
2     claim 16, wherein the retaining element has in addition a layer of non-meshed  
3     cellulose fibers with a fluid retention value which is made up of the quotients of the  
4     mass ( $g_{FI}$ ) of the fluid absorbed and the dry mass ( $g_{Fiber}$ ) of the cellulose fibers and is  
5     between 1.0 and 1.4  $g_{FI}/g_{Fiber}$  and at least 20 % by weight of superabsorbent polymer  
6     materials.

1                   18.     (Amended) The absorbent hygienic article in accordance with  
2     claim 17, wherein the additional layer of the retaining element is disposed under the  
3     layer of intrameshed cellulose fibers.

1                   19.     (Amended) The absorbent hygienic article in accordance with  
2     claim 18, wherein the additional layer has a layer-like area on the side not in physical  
3     contact with the body in use which is free of superabsorbent materials.

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Cancel claim 20.